

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

February 3, 2004

Support the Preservation of America's Cultural Heritage!  
Cosponsor H.R. 3569, the "National Film Preservation Act of 2003"!!

Dear Colleague:

We invite you to join us in encouraging the preservation of historically important and valuable films by becoming a cosponsor of H.R. 3569, the "National Film Preservation Act of 2003."

H.R. 3569 reauthorizes the National Film Preservation Board ("NFPB") and the National Film Preservation Foundation ("NFPF") for ten years. Immediate reauthorization is necessary because authorization for these programs officially expired on October 11, 2003, while their funding expired September 30, 2003. This legislation also increases the authorized appropriations for the NFPF, while continuing to ensure that authorized appropriations are only made available to match private contributions to the NFPF. Counterpart legislation has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Ranking Member of the Committee on the Judiciary.

Motion pictures are amongst our nation's cultural treasures, going beyond entertainment to represent American ideals and values to people across the world. Unfortunately, the films on which many motion pictures are created are easily susceptible to physical deterioration; in fact, over fifty percent of movies made before 1950 have deteriorated and over ninety percent of movies from before 1929 have disintegrated.

In 1996, Congress created the NFPB and the NFPF to help preserve these national treasures. The NFPB, an affiliate of the Library of Congress, generates public awareness of the national film registry and reviews initiatives to ensure the preservation of valued films. The NFPF issues grants to libraries and other institutions that can save films from degradation, improve film access for education and exhibition, and increase public commitment to preserving film as a cultural resource and historical record. In essence, its mission is to save America's "orphan films," those newsreels, silent films, documentaries, avant-garde works, and other independent films that are not preserved by commercial interests.

Since its inception, the NFPF has done great work in furtherance of this goal. Working with more than 80 organizations, it has helped preserve approximately 600 films and collections. The NFPF has made it possible for organizations in 34 states and the District of Columbia to use these films in education and research. Many of the films preserved provide unique windows into American history and culture; preserved films include social dramas from Thomas Edison's studio, the earliest "talkie" of an American president, and home movies clandestinely shot by Japanese Americans in World War II detention camps.

This legislation is vital to the preservation of our cultural heritage. Therefore, we hope you will join us as sponsors. To become a cosponsor of this legislation, or if you would like additional information, please contact Sampak Garg (Conyers) at x5-1609 or Alec French (Berman) at x5-2022.

Sincerely,

John Conyers, Jr.  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary

Howard L. Berman  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Courts, the  
Internet, and Intellectual Property